

87TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
2d Session } No. 1477

IMPORTATION OF HONEY BEES

MARCH 22, 1962.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. COOLEY, from the Committee on Agriculture, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 8050]

The Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 8050) to amend the act relating to the importation of adult honey bees, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The act of August 31, 1922 prohibits the importation into the United States of one of the four species of honey bees. This bill would extend this prohibition to cover all adult honey bees, as a necessary additional measure to prevent entry into the United States of a serious disease of honey bees.

NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

Until recently it was believed that *Apis mellifera* was the only species of honey bees which carried the acarine mite, which is responsible for acarine disease, the most serious single disease affecting honey bees. Recently, however, an infestation of these mites was found on another species of honey bees which had been imported into the United States for use at the Beltsville Experiment Station. Since it has now been demonstrated that the mite is carried by other species of honey bees, scientists of the Department of Agriculture believe that to assure protection of honey bees in the United States from this disease, the importation of adults of all species of honey bees must be prohibited, except for experimental purposes under controlled conditions.

Honey bees are of substantial economic importance in the United States, not only because of their production of honey (which amounts

to approximately \$50 million annually) but also because they are relied on heavily for the pollination of more than 50 crops grown in this country. It has been estimated that the value of honey bees to agriculture through their pollination activities is at least 10 times that of the honey and beeswax they produce.

COST OF THE LEGISLATION

The Department of Agriculture reports that enactment of this bill would not involve the expenditure of any additional funds.

DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL

Enactment of this legislation was requested in an executive communication of June 23, 1961, from the Secretary of Agriculture to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The need for the legislation is set out in some additional detail in the executive communication, text of which follows:

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C., June 23, 1961.

Hon. SAM RAYBURN,
Speaker, House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: There is transmitted herewith, for the consideration of the Congress, a draft bill entitled "To amend the act relating to the importation of adult honey bees."

The proposed legislation would amend the Honey Bee Act (42 Stat. 833; 7 U.S.C. 281) to prohibit or regulate the importation into the United States of adult honey bees of all species and subspecies. The present law is now specifically limited in its application to only one species of honey bees.

The proposed amendment would also amend the second proviso of 7 U.S.C. 281. Under that proviso adult honey bees may be imported into the United States from countries in which the Secretary of Agriculture shall determine that no diseases dangerous to adult honey bees exist. The proposed amendment would add a provision that adult honey bees could not be imported from countries which do not take adequate precautions to prevent the importation of honey bees from countries where such diseases occur.

Apis mellifera, "the present species" name for the honey bee designated as *Apis mellifica* in the act, is only one of four known species of honey bees, the others being *A. indica*, *A. florea*, and *A. dorsata*. These latter three species may now be imported without restriction since the present act is specifically limited in its application to *A. mellifera*. Recently an infestation of *Acarapis woodi*, a mite that causes a serious disease of *A. mellifera*, was discovered at the Beltsville Bee Culture Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture in specimens of *A. indica* imported from India. This illustrates the potential danger in importing species of *Apis* other than *A. mellifera*.

Acarine disease, caused by the mite *Acarapis woodi* Rennie, is one of the most serious diseases affecting the honey bee. This disease is considered more serious than any other disease of bees, adult or brood, by apiculturists in the countries where it exists. In some cases abroad it has been so destructive that it has virtually wiped out the apiculture industry in heavily infested localities.

The acarine mite is known to be present in 22 countries which represent most of Europe plus South Africa, India, and two countries in South America—Argentina and Uruguay. It is probable the disease also occurs in other countries where its presence has not been noted. The probability of this is suggested by the facts associated with the discovery of acarine disease at Beltsville in the bees from Punjab, India. That was the first record of the mite being present in India and first for the indica species.

At the present time to our knowledge we do not have the disease in the United States. We have had quarantine restrictions on the importation of bees since 1922, imposed primarily to exclude this disease. Should the disease be introduced into the United States, it could have a devastating effect not only upon beekeeping but upon agriculture in general through the more than 50 crops that now rely heavily on the honey bee for pollination. There are approximately 450,000 beekeepers in the United States operating a total number of colonies in excess of 5 million. The value of the honey bee in pollination is often quoted as at least 10 times that of the honey and beeswax crop of \$50 million annually.

Amendment of the act as recommended would not involve the expenditure of any additional funds for its enforcement, since its effect would be to prohibit the importation of additional species of adult honey bees, except that the Department could bring in such bees under adequate safeguards if necessary for experimental purposes.

A similar letter is being sent to the President of the Senate.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this proposed legislation from the standpoint of the administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

ORVILLE L. FREEMAN.

IMPORTATION OF HONEY BEES

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with clause 3 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

ACT OF AUGUST 31, 1922 (7 USC 281)

SEC. 1. [In order to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases dangerous to the adult honeybee, the importation into the United States of the honeybee (*Apis mellifica*) in its adult stage is prohibited, and all adult honeybees offered for import into the United States shall be destroyed if not immediately exported: *Provided*, That such adult honeybees may be imported into the United States for experimental or scientific purposes by the United States Department of Agriculture: *And provided further*, That such adult honeybees may be imported into the United States from countries in which the Secretary of Agriculture shall determine that no diseases dangerous to adult honeybees exist, under rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Agriculture.]

*Sec. 1. In order to prevent the introduction and spread of diseases dangerous to the adult honeybee, the importation into the United States of all honeybees of the genus *Apis* in the adult stage is hereby prohibited, and all adult honeybees offered for import into the United States shall be destroyed if not immediately exported: Provided, That such adult honeybees may be imported into the United States by the United States Department of Agriculture for experimental or scientific purposes: Provided further, That such adult honeybees may be imported into the United States from countries in which the Secretary of Agriculture shall determine that no diseases dangerous to adult honeybees exist and that adequate precautions have been taken by such countries to prevent the importation of honeybees from countries where such dangerous diseases exist, under rules and regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Agriculture.*

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NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

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Honey bees are of substantial economic importance in the United States, not only because of their production of honey (which amounts

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The acarine mite is known to be present in 22 countries which represent most of Europe plus South Africa, India, and two countries in South America—Argentina and Uruguay. It is probable the disease also occurs in other countries where its presence has not been noted. The probability of this is suggested by the facts associated with the discovery of acarine disease at Beltsville in the bees from Punjab, India. That was the first record of the mite being present in India and first for the indica species.

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